

北卡大學交換學生心得報告

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Pamela Della Valle



I did not know what to expect on the airplane ride over. I knew I would only be here for three weeks and all I expected was to learn the basic concepts of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), but I got much more. I did not expect to learn Chinese characters or to make friends with doctors twice my age. I never imagined I would acupuncture myself and could only dream of to interact with patients at the level in which I did. I came to Taiwan with two huge limitations: I do not speak Mandarin nor did I know the slightest thing about TCM. Despite these two obstacles I was able to gain a wealth of knowledge and fall in love with the island I knew very little about.

My experience at CSMU was intended to expose me to TCM so that I could have a better understanding of another form of medicine used by many people for many centuries, not to mention a great interest of mine as well. But in actuality, my thesis paper is on the status of the integration of TCM and Western medicine so the department of Integrated Medicine at Chung Shan was ideal to my studies. At the end of the three weeks I had not only learned what I came to the university to learn but was able to make fantastic observations on the integration of the two medicines and the sentiments of both the patients and doctors towards TCM and Western medicine.

During what I like to call “clinical” I learned how to diagnose a patient using the Four Methods: Look, Listen/Smell, Asking, and Palpations. This is a very natural procedure to me now especially since I got to practice all of them except the asking portion (although I did ask the doctor questions and if he hadn’t yet asked he would translate the question for me) but this seemed foreign to me at first. Why did he look at the tongue? What does heat mean? Why mango is not good in the summer? Fruit after all is good for our health I thought. Not only did my mentality begin to change every time I stepped into the clinic but my senses were tuned. My pulse-taking abilities have increased, compared to not being able to find a weak pulse at all, and I can now understand certain parts of a conversation without even understanding Chinese. There were extended periods of time where everything being spoken was in a different language so I would observe: the tone of voice, face expressions, hand gestures, and the reaction of the listener. With

the entire context I could seriously understand the meaning of phrases! I was startled the first time this happened.

After using the Four Methods to gather observations of signs and symptoms the doctor can then go about treating the patient. This is where my knowledge is still very limited but I understand vaguely the process of differentiating and prescribing herbs and applying acupuncture. The body contains 14 channels of which 360 common usage points are identified. I have learned some of these and am familiar with about 20 of the most used points while with Dr. Lin. Most of Dr. Lin's patients had neurological problems such as trauma and stroke but also included women seeking weight loss and patients that suffered from soreness and pain.

Dr. Chang and Dr. Lin taught me the use of common herbs such as goochi and licorice as well as the purpose of different fangfa. I actually got to taste and smell many herbs with Dr. Chang and got prescribed a fang in powder form. Learning herbs proved to be more difficult for me than acupuncture channels and points, probably because of the way acupuncture is systematically divided while with the herbs provided me little structure in which to divide and learn them.

I have found that being an integrated doctor of both Western and Traditional Chinese Medicine is not easy. Not only because you have to spend extra time in school but because the two medicines are fundamentally very different methods to treat a patient. Despite their differences, doctors have mastered both and are able to recognize when using either is more appropriate. I feel like they have more of an objective view on the different medicines and have found that the doctors consistently have the same opinions, like their views on western drug. I admire integrated doctors because they have dedicated time into learning both forms of medicine in order to provide superior treatment to a patient. They have acknowledged that neither is best and neither is complete. They both have limitations but together they might provide the most complete form of medicine available.

**I am thankful beyond what words can explain for this amazing opportunity provided to me. I am forever indebt to everyone at CSMU. Thank you so much.

[回瀏覽中山醫學大學電子報](#)